

**In order to comply with Montana state law, all personal information has been removed from public comments.**

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A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Comment on a Project  
Submitted: 08/07/2008 22:14:43  
Project Commenting On: Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

**Comment or Question:**

As a bike commuter in Helena, i am keenly aware of the dangers to bicyclists in our city, so the first thing I noticed about the Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study is the hazard created by 22 choke points. Putting cyclists and motorists so close together on a well traveled highway would not make for an enjoyable bike ride. The BNSF track makes so much more sense from both a safety and economic standpoint. such a bike path along the scenic Missouri River would quickly become a destination as it has in so many other nearby states. Please don't abandon this hope of so many cyclists in the Helena and Great Falls areas.

Reference Number = picomment\_1988525390625

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Action Item: Web Comment or Suggestion  
Submitted: 08/07/2008 21:19:20

**Comment or Question:**

Why was this study even done? Surely the numerous chokepoints and route type transitions were discoverable without much effort. They make this route essentially unworkable for a real bike connection between Helena and Great Falls.

One solution would be to close the entire Interstate between the two cities to truck and automobile traffic and allow non-motorized vehicles only. While somewhat tongue-in-cheek and certainly impossible to pull off, such a solution might have more merit than one would think at first blush.

In any event, use of the connecting and, for all purposes of transport, abandoned rail line would be a much cheaper, spectacular and safe public bike trail. It would be a lasting message to the future that some really did care about public health and the environment.

Reference Number = webcomment\_655517578125

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Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2008 12:28 PM

I'm very supportive of bike trails and former rail tracks provide a great way for states to provide bike trails. Our family from grandparents to grandkids had a great experience on the Couer d'Alene bike trail. In rural N. Minnesota, there is a wonderful long bike trail situated on a former rail bed. Montana needs to be more proactive in securing former rail beds to develop bike trails. We have spectacular scenery and should take advantage of attracting this type of tourist.

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Action Item:           Comment on a Project  
Submitted:           07/28/2008 20:41:57  
Project Commenting On:   Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:

I appreciate the time and expense that the department spent on the Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study. What it confirmed for me was the need to pursue the option of the existing rail line between the two town, and that is no longer in use. As we continue to run out of gasoline, we must look at alternatives for public recreation. We had the chance to create an amazing resource when the Milwaukee Road ceased to exist and it would be a shame to lose this option. Those states who have successfully converted rails to trails have captured the benefits already... and those benefits will only continue to grow with the price of gasoline.

Reference Number = picomment\_281341552734375

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A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item:           Comment on a Project  
Submitted:           07/25/2008 14:17:23  
Project Commenting On:   Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:

I am not completely opposed to using the current public right of way to build a public trail system, but I am concerned with the 22 chokepoints identified in this study.

I have children and I will not take them on a trail that requires us to ride the shoulder over bridges, around blind corners, or through underpasses. I much prefer the option of continued investigation into a "rails to trails" type arrangement that does not require users to merge with auto traffic.  
Thank You.

Reference Number = picomment\_189117431640625

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Action Item:                      Comment on a Project  
Submitted:                      07/22/2008 14:59:30  
Project Commenting On:      Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:

As someone who has been intimately involved in establishing a Rail Trail between Helena and Great Falls for the past four years I can't help but point out the glaring omission of this study. The sole reason for this study is to propose a publically funded alternative to a Rail Trail yet there is no comparison set forth in the study to determine if it is a better or worse alternative. The Director's rationale for excluding a Rail Trail comparison during the public hearing is inaccurate. Over the course of the last four years, BNSF has, on several occasions, changed their public position on whether abandonment of the line was imminent or not. Such is the prerogative of a private business in a rapidly changing economy. The truth is BNSF could change their position tomorrow and thus a Rail Trail is just as viable as it was four years ago. And why would the Department make an arbitrary assumption one way or the other? The MDOT Director does not sit on the board of BNSF and shouldn't pretend to. The public deserves better. We deserve to see the whole picture. Specifically the cost, potential economic benefit, and safety of a bike path on the public right-of-way versus a Rail Trail on the existing BNSF right-of-way.

Reference Number = picomment\_1080322265625

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A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item:                      Comment on a Project  
Submitted:                      07/19/2008 14:01:44  
Project Commenting On:      Helena/Great Falls Bike Path Study  
Nearest Town/City to Project:      Helena/Great Falls

Comment or Question:

I attended the recent meeting in Cascade, and commented at that time. Your presentation was excellent and represented an impressive effort to define the possibilities for bicycle recreation between Helena and Great Falls. More such studies and subsequently more bike paths are needed. However, the study was restricted to specifically exclude comparison with a rail trail on the BNSF tracks now used for rail car storage. The following comments were also submitted to the Great Falls Tribune in response to their article on the July 9 meeting:

- Major safety issues must be addressed. On again- off again protected bikeways such as DOT proposed are hazardous, especially for young or inexperienced riders. It is precisely these young riders we want to encourage to use the paths.
- The proposal is expensive and thus, should provide many public benefits in return for taxpayers' funds. Unfortunately, the route as described will not become a "destination" for touring or vacation bicyclists in the way that the Coeur d'Alene trail in northern Idaho has. The huge economic benefits of that path are unlikely to accrue to the proposal as it presently exists
- The lack of interest by BNSF in selling the rail corridor probably reflects the lack of interest by our state leaders. In S. Dakota, the Mikelson trail, named for a supportive governor, succeeded because of such support. Visionary leadership from governmental officials might bring BNSF to the bargaining table
- Past losses of Montana's heritage (Charlie Russell collection now residing in Fort Worth, Texas and the recreation access sites along the old Milwaukee rail line) are now widely lamented. A dedicated, safe recreation corridor between Helena and Great Falls should not become another opportunity tragically lost.

Reference Number = picomment\_99102783203125

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A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item:                      Comment on a Project  
Submitted:                      07/15/2008 11:29:18  
Project Commenting On:    Helena-Great Falls Bike/Pedestrian Path Feasibility Study

Comment or Question:

The bike route is really needed. Helena does not have shoulders on the roads to ride and the majority of motorists do not understand "sharing the road". Is scary to ride in Helena as I have had motorists intentionally try to run us off the road, we get honked at and people pass as close as possible even with the passing lane clear. Its crazy! This is so needed. We travel to spokane and coeur D'Alene now to ride safely, so it would be nice to keep the business in our neck of the woods and MT vs other states. This trail system is sooo needed. Please, Please, please keep up the good work in improving roadways, educaiton and projects like this one.

Reference Number = picomment\_832061767578125

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A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item:                      Comment on a Project  
Submitted:                      07/09/2008 16:59:19  
Project Commenting On:    Helena-Great Falls Bike/Pedestrian Path Feasibility Study

Comment or Question:

This is with regard to the Helena-Great Falls Bike/Pedestrian Path Feasibility Study. I would like to see a path separate from the main roads, since it is much safer for cyclists, especially for cyclists with children or cyclists who have less experience on roads. I have heard the arguments against building a separate path, but paths can be made from the bicycle/pedestrian path to businesses and should be encouraged. It's just best to keep the path separate from vehicle pathways.

Reference Number = picomment\_832733154296875

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A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item:           Comment on a Project  
Submitted:            07/09/2008 12:37:16  
Project Commenting On:   Bike trail from Helena to Great Falls

Comment or Question:

I want a bike trail that is separate from the road grade and traffic that runs between Helena and Great Falls following Little Prickley Pear Creek and the Missouri River. This would be a great thing for the people of the state and would also be a tourist draw.

I definately support this type of thing. More Bike trails, bike lanes, and bike paths.

Thanks,

{signed}

Reference Number = picomment\_425140380859375

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A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item:           Comment on a Project  
Submitted:            06/30/2008 09:50:54  
Project Commenting On:   Helena-Freat Falls Bike/Pedestrian Path Feasibility Study

Comment or Question:

I strongly support creation of a bike/pedestrian path between Helena and Great Fall. The path would be a great asset to the region and a source of income for the communities along the path.

I am a Minnesota native, and made use of the many hundreds of miles of similar paths in Minnesota and Wisconsin. In every instance, the presence of the paths resulted in good things for the towns and municipalities in their vicinity. The concerns listed in the recent IR article (i.e. trespassing, noise, littering, other landowner impacts, and disturbance of wildlife) were not an issue in the above states, and are probably driven by fear of the unknown. Cyclists, hikers, and other "silent sport" advocates simply are respectful of the environment and others, and are not a typical source of those issues. I know of no instances in the above states where these issues were a problem. In fact, many cycling groups, hiking clubs, or individual families "adopted" portions of trails to help with maintenance. If there was any issue, it was usually caused by unauthorized motorized trail use (snowmobiles or ATVs) which resulted in trail damage. Also, property owners along the trails actually saw their real estate values increase because location on a trail was seen as a desirable selling feature.

Bottom line, the trail would be a good thing for all. I sincerely hope that the state, county, and local municipalities support the creation of the path.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

{signed}

Reference Number = picomment\_73773193359375

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A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item:           Comment on a Project  
Submitted:            06/27/2008 10:15:13  
Project Commenting On:   Helena Bike Path Study

Comment or Question:

The Missouri River canyon between Cascade & Wolf Creek is the most awesome place in the world for a bike path. I'm getting old (52) & can't hike anymore (bad knees) - bicycling is my only way to get outdoors & enjoy Montana's beauty.

Such a trail may add years to my life!

Reference Number = picomment\_642364501953125

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A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item:           Comment on a Project  
Submitted:           06/25/2008 15:10:18  
Project Commenting On:   Helena-Great Falls Bike/Pedestrian Path Feasibility Study  
Project State Highway No.: I-15  
Nearest Town/City to Project: Cascade  
Project Milepost:       166

Comment or Question:

I am writing to give/throw my TOTAL support for the "Helena-Great Falls Bike/Pedestrian Path". It's a win-win for the communities along the way. The current eye sore i.e. the "container" holding rail cars one witnesses while driving Interstate I-15 between Great Falls and Helena are not the worst thing to decorate the track, but it would be far more pleasant to see human beings.

Reference Number = picomment\_635498046875

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RECEIVED

JUL 08 2008

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

7/6/08

ZIA KAZIMI  
MDT PLANNING DIVISION  
P.O. BOX 201001  
HELENA, MT 59620-1001

DEAR ZIA,

AS WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ATTEND ON 7/9/08  
THE PUBLIC MEETING REGARDING THE BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN  
PATH FEASIBILITY IN CASCADE, MT, WE WOULD LIKE TO OFFER  
OUR COMMENTS IN THIS LETTER.

AND I FEEL THIS PATH SHOULD BE  
CONSTRUCTED AND MAINTAINED. WE THINK THAT RECREATIONAL  
CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER  
WHILE SHARING THE ROAD WITH MOTOR VEHICLES. THE PATH  
SHOULD INCREASE USE OF OUR BEAUTIFUL CANYON BY MOSTLY  
PEOPLE WHO ARE SENSITIVE TO OUR NATURAL SETTING, SO WE ARE  
NOT CONCERNED WITH INCREASES IN LITTERING, NOR ANY  
ESCALATION IN CRIME. PEOPLE INTERESTED IN PHYSICAL FITNESS  
AND SCENIC SPLENDOR ARE NORMALLY OF HIGH MORAL  
CHARACTER AND SHOULD NOT BE AN ADVERSE ISSUE. PROPERTY  
VALUES ON OR NEAR THE PATH SHOULD, AS OTHER AREAS  
PUTTING THIS PLAN TO USE, INCREASE - RESULTING IN GREATER  
TAX REVENUE FOR THE COUNTY. SMALL TOWNS, SUCH AS CASCADE  
SHOULD BECOME MORE PROSPEROUS, CLEANER AND MORE ATTRACTIVE.  
INCREASED REVENUE WILL OFFER ABILITY TO EXPAND BETTER  
LOCAL SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS. WE ARE WILLING TO PAY  
FOR THIS PATH THROUGH INCREASED TAX ASSESSMENTS - IT'S WORTH  
THE MONEY TO BETTER OUR COMMUNITY, EVEN IF WE DO NOT CHOOSE  
TO USE IT.

SINCERELY,





# Comment form

Project name: Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Between Helena & Great Falls Study

Project ID: NA Control Number: NA

Meeting date and time: Wednesday, July 9, 2008 6:30 p.m. Open House; 7:00 Presentation Location: Wedsworth Hall,  
#13 Front Street S, Cascade, MT

You are invited to make your comments on this form and place it in the comment box located at the sign-in table or take it with you and mail it to Zia Kazimi, MDT Planning Division, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001

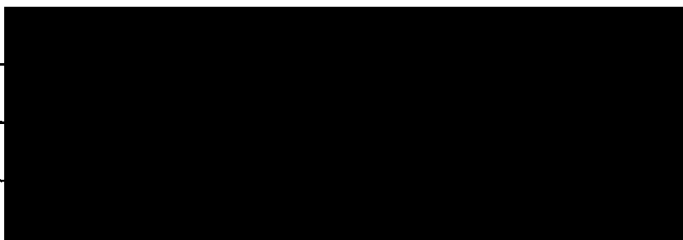
Comments may also be submitted by fax to (406) 444-7671 or online at [www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment\\_form.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml)

The deadline for comments is August 11, 2008.

Please indicate your name, address and affiliation (if any) below.

Thank you for your interest in and comments about this project. Please use the back and/or additional sheets of paper if necessary.

Name and address **(Include physical address & email address, please):**



Ian

Comments: There are a variety of reasons that make this bicycle/pedestrian path a win-win; the myriad of bike trails for X-country bicyclists whether Great Divide or Adven. Cycling routes—this would augment options, safety, of these 'green-minded', <sup>peace</sup> piece of mind for ~~drivers~~ <sup>riders</sup> tourism—more options for travel. It is a great concept and I hope that it becomes a reality. The time to do this feasibility study is great! appreciated. The study is clear, concise, well thought out!

You would market a user group! Local putzers, bicycle route for tourism, races, runs, etc.

NOTE: Widened shoulders should be considered on all highways. We have a great state—this would be wonderful for safety of travelers.

RECEIVED

JUL 22 2008

Montana Department of Transportation



# Comment form

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Name and address **(Include physical address & email address, please):**

[Redacted area for name and address]

Comments: FIRST OF ALL, MY CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR FEASIBILITY STUDY - THE COMMITTEE DID AN EXCEPTIONAL JOB AND THE PRESENTATION IN CASCADE WAS INFORMATIVE AND VERY IMPRESSIVE.  
\* I WOULD ENCOURAGE THE LEGISLATURE OF 2009 TO APPROVE THIS PROJECT. IDEALLY, THE RAILROAD BED WOULD BE GOOD; BUT IT ISN'T FEASIBLE TO HOLD OFF ON DOING SOMETHING UNTIL THEY (PERHAPS) DECIDE TO ABANDON. THE CURRENT SITUATION WITH BICYCLISTS USING THE FRONTAGE ROAD ON THE ROADWAY WITH NO SHOULDERS IS NOT SAFE FOR THE CYCLISTS OR THE VEHICULAR TRAFFIC. HOPEFULLY IT WILL NOT TAKE ANOTHER FATAL ACCIDENT IN ORDER FOR THE ACCESS FOR RECREATIONISTS TO IMPROVE. THERE IS AN INCREASED INTEREST IN BICYCLING DISTANCES - ALREADY - THERE ARE 2-3 "RACES" PER SUMMER BETWEEN GF/HILLM/WOLF CREEK/HELENA. THE PEOPLE WHO BICYCLE ALSO PAY TAXES FOR THE ROADWAYS, IT WOULD BE IDEAL FOR THEM TO HAVE SAFE ACCESS TO DISTANCES - (OVER)

I WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE THAT, IF THE PROJECT IS APPROVED,  
THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO STARTING FROM THE GREAT FALLS  
END - I THINK IT WOULD BE ~~EASY~~ ENOUGH TO TIE IN TO RIVERS EDGE  
TRAIL (PERHAPS ALONG FLOOD ROAD TO ULM - INCORPORATE OUR  
TRAILS (JOE'S TRAIL - ULM + CASCADE). THIS WOULD BE A  
GREAT BOOST FOR YOU (ALREADY 2 SECTIONS NEARLY READY  
CASCADE'S IS PAVED - ULM NEEDS FINAL SURFACING) AND FOR  
[REDACTED] WHICH IS STRUGGLING TO KEEP IT GOING. WE  
ASO ALSO HAVE A "SLUSH FUND" WE COULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARD  
THE FINAL PAVING OF ULM - PLEASE CONSIDER THIS PROPOSAL  
SHOULD THE LEGISLATURE APPROVE IT.

IF YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION REGARDING THE PARTICULARS -  
PLEASE CALL [REDACTED]

THANK YOU - AND CONGRATULATIONS ON A JOB WELL DONE. /

[REDACTED]



AUG 4 2008

# Comment form

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Project name: Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Between Helena & Great Falls Study

Project ID: NA Control Number: NA

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Please indicate your name, address and affiliation (if any) below.

Thank you for your interest in and comments about this project. Please use the back and/or additional sheets of paper if necessary.

Name and address **(Include physical address & email address, please):**



I love to ride Joe's Trail (Cascade)  
for exercise each day (even through  
the winter months).  
It is good exercise which is <sup>also</sup> economical.

Please support Senate Bill 190 sponsored  
by Senator Lewis in your next legislative  
session.

It provides a cost effective way to  
exercise off the narrow frontage roads  
making the trails safe alternative  
to vehicles and pedestrians alike.

Thank you for your consideration!

